

Some Questions and Answers.

Q: What are the principal ceremonies after death?

A: Last Rites	अन्त्येष्टि
Tenth day Shrāddha	दश गात्र
12 th , 13 th day Shrāddha	तेरही
6 month Shrāddha	छमासी
12 month Shrāddha	वर्षि
Pitr Paks Shrāddha	Performed annually.

Q: Can a wedding or Upanayan be held before the twelfth day ceremony, on the demise of a close relative?

A: Yes, but only if Nandhi Mukh Shrāddha had been done before the death. No, if Nandhi Mukh Shrāddha has not been done.

Q: What is Nandhi Mukh Shrāddha?

A: It is a ceremony performed in honour of the Pitrs (manes, departed ancestors) before a happy / festive occasion, especially weddings and Upanayan (investing the sacred thread).

Q: When is the ceremony generally done?

A: This is usually done about ten to fourteen days before the wedding, Upanayan.

NB: All the food, clothing and other necessities to be used on the happy occasion, are especially set aside beforehand, by means of Sankalpa (declaration) chanted by the priest and the Yajman.

Q: Is there any reason why this ceremony is not commonly done in South Africa?

A: There are no reasons besides neglect and ignorance of the need to do it.

NB: In addition this gives the family the right to have the planned function even before the birth of a child.

Q: Is there a need to do a forty day ceremony after a birth or a death?

A: Definitely Not! There is no such observance required by our scriptures.

Q: Do we have a three day Hawan after death in our scriptures?

A: There is no such Hawan prescribed in our scriptures.

Q: Why do people stop all routine(daily) Puja to God and other Deities, during the period called Pitr Paks?

A: Stopping of routine Puja for the duration of Pitr Paks is wrong. In fact daily Puja (Sandhya) must be completed before Pitr Puja and Tarpana (water oblations).

Q: When do we stop daily, routine Puja?

A: Daily Puja is stopped only during Satak caused by death. Actually all the rituals performed during this period constitute "Puja".

Q: How long does Satak caused, by death last?

A: Such Satak lasts until Sapindi ceremony is done.

Q: Is a father permitted to light the funeral pyre at the cremation of a son, or do the other funerals rites?

A: Garuda Purana (11,19) states: "A father should neither light the pyre, nor himself do the Antyesti Sanskar or any ceremony related to the death of his son".

Q: After death and at the time of cremation, in which direction must the corpse be made to lie?

A: After death and at the time of cremation rituals, the corpse must be made to lie with the head to the North.

Q: Can Hawan and Tarpana (water oblations) be done on the tenth day ceremony?

A: No! Hawan and Tarpana is not permitted before Sapindi.

Q: Can daily routine Puja be done when Satak is caused by the birth of a child?

A: Daily routine Puja does not stop, but continues as usual. Only the mother (Prasuti) of the newly born child is affected by such a Satak. The rest of the family is cleansed after a bath. Life goes on as normal.

Q: What is Chhamai? छमाई

A: Wedding or Upanayan Sanskara may be performed if it is urgent after the performance of a special ceremony called Chhamai which must be done on the 14th, 16th, 17th day or 1 1/2 months or 5 1/2 months from the date of the demise.

Q: Does the widow have to wash off her sindoor on the death of her husband?

A: There is no scriptural backing for such a ritual. However, the widow ceases using the sindoor in the traditional manner.

Q: Is there any restriction to attending Satsangh after the 12/13th day Shrāddha?

A: No! It is good and spiritually beneficial to attend Satsangh regularly.

Q: What is Tilanjali?

After the cremation / burial, the performer of the last rites offers three anjali (handfuls) of water mixed with thil on a Kusa planted in the ground. This act is called Tilanjali. It marks and emphasizes the complete severance of bodily